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THE
INFLUENCES
OF
SENSIBILITY;
A Poem,
IN THREE PARTS.

CREATION'S HEIR, THE WORLD, THE WORLD, IS MINE !
GOLDSMITH.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
AND SOLD BY
J. MAWMAN, POULTRY; AND J. HATCHARD,
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1810.

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DEDICATION.

TO MR. J*** H*****.

SIR,

WHERE past obligation or expected favour induce the dedication, it must often happen that generosity is the only virtue which merits the offered praise.

Happy is the Author, who, freed from servile or grateful dependance, possesses the advantage of selection: and superlatively so, if the object of his choice not only deserves this tribute of esteem, but at the same time affords an exemplification of the nature of his work: for, in the number of a writer's pleasures, none is equal to the consciousness that the embellishments of his fancy, and the

enthusiasm of his description, are authorised by the modesty of nature, and acknowledged in the reality of life. In inscribing therefore the following composition, I can sincerely say, that truth has confirmed the choice naturally suggested by affection and veneration, and that as I have fixed my attention upon you in many of its passages which are intended to record the honour of human nature and detail the best qualities of the mind, I cannot but consider it just, that if the Public regard my first-fruits with complacency, you share the favour with me.

If gratitude be not due where temporal care and affection have been combined with the inculcation of the most important truths, and the love of the chief good cherished even from childhood, where shall we inscribe

it? and when so justified, its most ardent and public expression cannot surely offend. If I could apprehend any possible danger of such an effect, I should not on this occasion have addressed the best of Parents.

I am,

SIR,

Your devoted Son and Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author thinks it necessary to observe, that when he had almost revised the last copy of the ensuing production, he happened, in looking over the catalogue of a public library, to notice ‘Poems by Robins:’ he procured the book, and was astonished to find that its principal title was ‘Sensibility:’ but if his surprise at this coincidence in the choice of subjects was great, he was happy to discover very little similarity in the general plan and ideas. Had he, notwithstanding his ignorance of that publication, been anticipated in these respects, he would certainly have suppressed his own rather than incur the character of a plagiarist: a charge from which, as he cannot think any one will impute it to him, he does not feel it necessary further to exculpate himself.

P.S. The Author deems himself unfortunate in being under the necessity of apologising twice on the same account: yet he cannot but congratulate the public on the cause. That he should be anticipated in two instances in the choice of a subject, can only be imputed to his partial acquaintance with modern publications; from the reading of which he has been in a great degree precluded by his situation. It will be at once discovered that he now alludes to a beautiful poem on Sensibility, by that celebrated Lady Mrs. Hannah More, published at the end of her Sacred Dramas. As the poem already referred to was unknown to the Author till his own was finished, so still more unfortunately this last was not seen by him till a much later period: when in passing a bookseller's window he read the title page and immediately purchased the volume. At this time his work was committed to the press; yet he almost felt himself disposed to withdraw it: not because he has exactly followed the same path, but because it might seem superfluous to say more on a sub-

ject to which so much justice had been done. He is, however, not without some hope that a larger survey of the subject, though with less beauty, may induce to its perusal, and that it may not lose all its attractions because it is not the first candidate of the public favour.

INFLUENCES OF SENSIBILITY.

PROGRESS OF THE POEM.

THE prefatory idea suggests the impossibility of reconciling men to the inferior situations of life were the resources of happiness confined to the participation of power and wealth. But as the means of gratifying the particular impulse of the breast are easily attained, and happiness in various forms accessible to all, the ardour of its pursuit is then considered, and the principle which invests every thing that is proposed to the imagination with attraction, attributed to the great and universal quality of Sensibility.

To this introduction succeeds the general survey of the subject, in which it has been the attempt to exhibit the influences of Sensibility as they comprise the duties as well as the happiness of man. The more particular detail of its pleasures follows; and these are classed by themselves, because Sensibility sometimes supposes pain.—The order there-

fore into which the subject naturally branched may be thus explained.—First its general effects, which include pity, sympathy, and benevolence; its sensitive pleasures, intellectual delights, and moral promotions.

The developement of the first division commences with a contrast of character as it differs in consequence of the possession or absence of the sympathies, and the affectation of Sensibility discriminated from the true quality: her empire is then traced to its origin, her influence demonstrated in the earliest periods of life, and the tendency of the social propensities as they become matured, slightly glanced at, and partially illustrated by an allusion to Park's travels in Africa: they are then traced through the domestic scene, where human kindness first begins, and progressively led forward to their completion in the noble principle of universal philanthropy. In the illustration of the pleasures, those are first considered which are abstracted or individual, that the poem may not lose the character of progression; as hope, memory, reflection, and imagination. The reciprocal pleasures succeed;

as friendship and love; which last passion as it involves the most refined endowments of the subject, is more copiously illustrated, its effects traced through their successive stages, and the connubial state contrasted with the life of celibacy.—The theme could not be dismissed without a digression to beauty, which includes its praise and general œconomy. The order is then resumed in its relation to the pleasures flowing from the elegant arts; as poetry, music, and painting. The scale ascending includes mental and moral improvement, and at last ends with the exhibition of public virtue as it is discovered in patriotism; in which, as a collective principle, it has the most visible exercise. Sensibility thus having attained her highest honours, a partial recapitulation is introduced for the sake of moral application, and an address to personal virtue; the final union of which with the subject concludes the poem.

INFLUENCES
OF
SENSIBILITY.



PART I.

INFLUENCES OF SENSIBILITY.

PART I.

THE pride of rule, and power's exalted care,
Essential order destines few to share;
And few preferr'd in honour's envied train,
Or blest with wealth, the splendid part sustain.

'Tis well for man that humbler spheres disclose
Unfailing springs, whence equal pleasure flows;
Or unrepining who could long endure,
Mechanic toil, and destiny obscure?
In every breast some powerful impulse reigns,
Which restless love of happiness retains;
This still repress'd would scorn subservient state,
And men would laugh at danger to be great.

But as remote from glory's vain applause,
 The soul aspires to virtue's nobler cause;
 As nature spreads her blooming stores around,
 And scenes unfold where ev'ry muse is found;
 As lofty science points her bright career,
 And all the train of beauteous art is near;
 As with delights that fondest hopes impart,
 Domestic scenes allure and keep the heart;
 Content we prosecute our destin'd way,
 And Heaven's benignant will in peace obey.

To thee, O Sensibility, we trace,
 This various good diffus'd to all the race!
 Thou art the principle in man assign'd,
 To catch the scatter'd rays which light the mind;
 To clothe with beauty and invest with joy
 The pleasing objects which its search employ;
 While destitute of thine inherent aid,
 All things were buried in eternal shade.

Yet there are found whose erring minds attempt
 A state from feeling and from joy exempt;
 Who struggle hard 'gainst nature's kind decrees,
 And view with scorn whom life's light trifles please;
 Consistent with whose solitary plan,
 Friendship is folly, love the curse of man,
 Benevolence a weakness, truth parade,
 Virtue mere instinct, fame an empty shade.
 Thus as in sullen apathy they live,
 And all their powers to cynic censure give;
 E'en mid the cheerful haunts of man conceal'd,
 And to each other's bosoms scarce reveal'd;
 At length they die without a friend to cheer
 The last sad moments of their dark career.

How wiser they whose hearts to nature true,
 Her laws accomplish, and her charms pursue;
 Who hail life's laughing pleasures as they rise,
 And all their joys in social good comprise;

Whose welfare pleases and whose care extends
To all the num'rous circle of their friends!

But hence the specious mimickries that flow,
From affectation's farce of joy and woe;
The charming sorrow, and the pleasing pain,
The muse rejects with suitable disdain;
Distress which gladdens, and delights which kill,
Or anguish which denotes a lap-dog ill,
Are far from them that feel the touch sincere,
Of melting pity's undissembled tear:
To such, O Sensibility, alone,
The secret whisper of thy voice is known.

Oh then, enamour'd of thy genuine flame,
Inspir'd by thee, may I record thy name;
Beneath thy smile pursue my fond design,
And feel thy spirit animate each line:
Else unattractive as the wintry skies,
When desolate around the landscape lies;

And no sweet blossom decks the naked thorn,
 And not a bird salutes the rising morn.

At first thy pow'r the infant's smiles confess,
 Ere lisping sounds its little wants express;
 What time the train of fancy's wishes spring,
 As yet unform'd, but time shall form their wing;
 And soft example whispers to the mind
 Innumerable things scarce yet design'd;
 Which soon around the observation twine,
 As leaves invest the tendrils of the vine;
 Beneath whose shade the embrio clusters lie,
 Till summer yield them blushing to the eye.

As rip'ning youth thy warmer influence feels,
 Day after day some latent grace reveals;
 Till all the qualities of mind expand,
 Beneath accomplishment's adorning hand.
 Then glows with ev'ry sympathy impress'd,
 In full maturity, the gen'rous breast;

Then in the face expressive we survey
 Diffus'd in love, the mind's unclouded day;
 Where every glance that leaves the radiant eye,
 Mingles benevolence and energy :
 At once attracted by the powerful charm,
 Congenial sentiments the bosom warm;
 Communication fans the rising fire,
 And soon to cordial union we aspire.
 Confiding then our various hopes and fears,
 Our cause of laughter and our source of tears;
 No unparticipated sports amuse,
 And not a scene the eye delighted views,
 But all the colours of description blend,
 The solitary pleasure to extend.

Thus, in dependance on each other still,
 We pass this varied scene of good and ill;
 Or if secluded from the social hour,
 We rove the victims of misfortune's pow'r,

Far wand'ring to the world's remotest scene,
 With boundless seas, and wilds immense between;
 'Tis still the cordial solace of our fate,
 That love and friendship our return await.
 Then conscious of the prompt and kind access,
 The bosom yields to pity's soft distress;
 The much-enduring trav'ller hastes to tell,
 The hair-breadth 'scapes and dangers which befell:
 How oft his courage and resources fail'd,
 By hunger, nakedness, and foes assail'd;
 Weary and sick, when almost hope forbore
 To fan the embers of exertion more.
 Nor are his favourable hours withheld,
 When casual aids to new research impell'd;
 Lo! while he faints upon the burning ground,
 With pity touch'd, the natives gather round;
 A brother's claim their conscious bosoms own,
 Glow with their purpose, and provide the boon;
 While thus their untaught sentiments prolong,
 In chorus full, the soul-dictated song.

"For him no wife with tender care is nigh,
 "To sooth his sorrows, and his wants supply;
 "To grind his corn, his milk and bread prepare,
 "Exhausted wand'ring in the desert air!"

Yes! when at length he leaves the distant strand,
 And, bless'd by heav'n, regains his native land,
 Amid the story of his fortunes there,
 His pen shall not forget the negro's care;
 But all the interesting page shall be,
 The source and grace of Sensibility.

Sweet pow'r! the dear relationships of life,
 To thee appealing, cease their little strife:
 No jealousy subverts the tender look,
 Nor anger mingles with the just rebuke;
 Forgiveness hastes to plead the bosom frail,
 And draws o'er ev'ry fault her spotless veil;
 As soft through air the snow diffusive steals,
 And soon the little vagrant's track conceals,

Who lur'd by play, his mother's charge forgot,
 Had stray'd advent'rous from the guardian cot.

But not alone to knit the social tie,
 And grace domestic scenes of sympathy,
 Thou bidd'st to all the human race extend
 The same regards which form the private friend;
 Or how to truth's discerning eye severe,
 Would all the various crimes of man appear?
 Ambition on the march for blood and spoil,
 Inebriate, glorying in his savage toil!
 Conspiracies, cabals in ev'ry state,
 Religious quarrel, and domestic hate!
 Revenge and malice with the fell intent,
 And murder on his damned errand sent!
 The rage of jealousy, and lawless fires
 Of appetite's insatiable desires!
 Injustice, and oppression's iron rod,
 Contempt of Virtue, and neglect of God!

At this review would swell th' indignant breast,
 Were Sensibility's soft voice suppress'd :
 Haste, black oblivion ! blot th' historic page ;
 Misanthropy ! inspire thy proudest rage ;
 Hail, wildest solitudes, and darkest caves,
 To thee we fly from life's tempestuous waves !

But when the mind revolves the various woe,
 Which with his frailty man is doom'd to know ;
 And thinks as soon his rapid youth matures,
 What hopes deceive, and what temptation lures ;
 How many fiends with syren forms appear,
 How many masks of pleasure vice can wear ;
 How oft the victim to despair and shame,
 And foul disease invades his tortur'd frame ;
 How pining poverty subdues the soul,
 And reason abdicates her strong control ;
 And fancy urges her fantastic reign,
 And madness rushes on the heated brain !

Rack'd with the horrors of its baleful dreams,
 Dash'd to and fro as whirl its strange extremes!—
 How many captives in their cells complain,—
 Th' innumerable hospitals of pain;
 What frequent shipwrecks strew the fatal strand,
 How famine blasts the desolated land;
 And plagues depopulate the towns around,
 And earthquakes rend the wide-involving ground;
 And dread volcanoes rushing on the plain,
 Hurry contiguous districts to the main!

When fancy thus the mournful scene discerns,
 Each soft emotion of the heart returns;
 And hermit cells and misanthropic caves,
 Give place to social life, and social graves:
 On every hand the charities appear
 Assiduous to commence their bless'd career;
 Where'er, administ'ring support they stray,
 Love smiles around and evils melt away;

While gratitude amid the alter'd scene,
To heav'n and man exalts the eye serene.

Such are the amiable ties which bind
The corresponding bosoms of mankind;
Around the gen'rous obligation steals,
And the firm compact ev'ry nation feels!

Yet not alone the kindred woes of man
And nature's wants cement the social plan;
The various good which fav'ring heav'n ordains,
With equal pow'r the sacred bond maintains.
Thus the warm heart dilates with joy sincere
As oft the fairer scenes of life appear;
As oft we view unfeigned virtue's reign,
Or piety her heav'n-ward flight sustain;
As oft within the splendid dome we trace
Benevolence and hospitable grace;
Or the pleas'd peasant see (his labour done)
Haste homeward ere descends the west'ring sun,

To dress the jasmine bow'r, the rose to twine,
 Or prune the wanton foliage of his vine :
 While she, the faithful partner of his cares,
 Solicitous the pleasing bus'ness shares ;
 Inspects the little beds of herbs and flow'rs,
 And with strict hand the needful moisture pours ;
 Spies each aggressor of the insect race,
 With indignation chas'd the blooming place.
 Or when a nobler prospect dawns around,
 And shews the charms in civil order found :
 In fair subordination, whence the state
 Looks from its throne of matchless pow'r elate ;
 Where each subservient class cements the whole,
 All moving on from one immense control ;
 Where justice, with establish'd pow'r combin'd,
 Presides o'er laws which civilize mankind,
 Th' encroachments of outrageous vice subdues,
 And virtue's charters of defence renews ;
 Where no one dare tyrannic pride display,
 Or none but self-degraded slaves obey ;

Where the poor orphan and the widow know
 Their little portion safe from ev'ry foe;
 And prompt rewards and shelt'ring roofs await
 The suff'ring guardians of a grateful state;
 And numberless retreats expand their doors,
 Where not a wretch in vain the boon implores.

Or when, beyond our native land inclin'd,
 The heart involves the good of all mankind.
 And say what shouts ascend in yonder sky?
 Along the strand what glorious tidings fly?
 'Tis liberty exalts the noble sound,—
 Triumph and exultation glow around!
 See the glad slave shake off the galling chain,
 No more to drag the tyrant curse again;
 Already warm'd with freedom's matchless fires,
 His rising breast distends, his eye aspires;
 With mien renew'd he treads the sounding earth,
 His ev'ry act proclaims a second birth;

He claims the rank to human nature giv'n,
And smiling views beyond his destin'd heav'n!

Will sorrow's secret voice no more complain,
But myriads breathe the ever grateful strain?
Are all the ties which nature's hand entwin'd,
Free to expand, and own the joy assign'd?
Will Africa's successive children hail
From age to age the animating tale?
And Britain, with her guilt no more appall'd,
Behold th' impending scourge from heav'n recall'd?
On you who long the gen'rous cause maintain'd,
Till perseverance the proud triumph gain'd,
On you th' accumulated good descends:
And if reward to worth like yours extends,
Contemporaneous praise shall waft your fame,
And latest History record your name.—
Happy could she select in ev'ry age
A Sharpe, a Clarkson to adorn her page,

Or bid th' enraptur'd patriot eye behold,
A Wilberforce in equal pride enroll'd.

But come, fair Order! and my verse dispose
Harmonious as from change to change it flows;
And bid each various theme my lay supplies,
In individual charm successive rise;
Disclosing first what secret springs excite
The mind's abstracted moments of delight;
As oft the solitary walk we lead
Along some margent green, or cowslip mead;
While in each brake the plaintive chaffinch sings,
And the warm breeze a mingled perfume brings.

And lo! as op'ning from some alpine height,
Th' Italian landscape cheers the pilgrim's sight;
Who long with lacerated feet had trod
The dang'rous precipice and flinty road;
So mid the shocks of life and toils of care,
Spent with fatigue, and hast'ning to despair,

Delighted fancy on the wing surveys
 Where some far glist'ning stream of pleasure strays;
 With hope pursues the devious current still,
 Sooth'd with the charm of meliorated ill!

Hope, whose pure lamp arises to illumine
 The vault of real or imagin'd gloom;
 And down the less'ning columns far prevails,—
 Futurity's interminable aisles!
 Athwart the shade the half-form'd visions gleam,
 And fate in vain evades the pow'rful beam.

But not alone to pierce the distant shade,
 Man calls on hope, and hope imparts her aid;
 Oft to the past, will mem'ry turn to view
 Scenes to which hope and joy have bid adieu;
 While softer feelings rise, and half suppress'd,
 Steals the slow sigh of languor from the breast

As when at sea the intermitting gale
 With gentler progress swells th' impatient sail,
 Gradual beneath the adverse current glides,
 The vessel lingers on the placid tides ;—
 So hope and mem'ry equal charms employ,
 And lull the heart in indolence of joy.

As hope recedes, and mem'ry's weary eye
 In languor sleeps, and all her visions fly,
 The temp'rate bosom to the grateful pow'r
 Of calm reflection yields the lonely hour.
 For oft the heart, with fancy less elate,
 Prefers the meditative mood sedate;
 Prefers, secluded from th' oppressive blaze
 Of noon, redundant pouring all its rays,
 Beneath the foliage shade some mossy brink,
 With Sensibility to "sit and think;"
 Where, touch'd with local pensiveness, the mind
 Improvement in each passing thought may find.

Perhaps we muse how first disorder rose,
 The long continued source of human woes;
 Or pause to think, in speculation bold,
 What secret laws the universe uphold!

Come, sage Philosophy! whose splendid reign
 Enchanted long thy filial heathen train;
 Come, with invention whisp'ring all thy schemes,
 In solemn pomp promulgate folly's dreams:
 And, as thy spirit fell from sire to son,
 Shew thy accumulated secrets won;
 Boast how improvement mark'd each rising age,
 Exulting point th' irradiating page;
 Till truth's devolving sun, from chaos sprung,
 And high thro' all thy blazing regions hung,
 In full effulgence bade mankind rejoice,
 While all the virtues hail'd thy sovereign voice!

Abash'd I see thee yield the futile claim,
 Quench thy misleading torch and light a purer flame.

For, thro' this lapse of intellectual night,
Reason in vain diffus'd her narrow light;
Beyond the reach of its expiring ray,
Existence held her undiscover'd way!

So in some vast and lofty echoing hall,
Where scarce the taper lights the distant wall,
In vain the eye directs its search around,
Nor fair design, nor ornament is found;
But uncouth forms instead, with ceaseless change,
In fancied vision crowd the shadowy range.

Shall science then to heathen lore appeal
For truths philosophy can not reveal?
And, fondly ling'ring at her hoary shrine,
Forget the altar rais'd by hands divine?
Forget the sacred page where all is taught
Of life and time, and who the wonders wrought?
Where order lifts her heav'n-proportion'd form,
Seen thro' th' apparent gloom and bursting storm;

And half reveals the secret of that hand
Which bade th' immeasurable scene expand!

Come, meditation, pass time's dread profound,
And hear thro' heav'n th' almighty mandate sound;
Lo! o'er illimitable depths display'd,
Light's blazing ensigns flash across the shade,
Till from the fathomless obscure of space,
The finish'd system gains its destin'd place;
Unnumber'd suns with all their planets throng,
And heav'n's full hosts commence th' harmonious song.
Lo! God himself approves the mighty plan,
And fair in Eden smiles the perfect man!

But soon the trembling mind with horror sees
Corruption's influence blot heav'n's pure decrees;
Till to the floods the dread command is giv'n,
'Break all your springs, and o'er the earth be driv'n.'
The conscious depths their Author's voice obey,
Burst from dissolving poles their headlong way!

In vain the troubled nations fly the plains,
 Swift on the hills the torrent ocean gains;
 Till, when'd beneath the boundless murm'ring tide,
 Nature and life in horror all subside!

Yet heav'n relents, and soon th' ærial bow
 Extends a monument of grace and woe;
 Earth's bounteous bosom teems with life again,
 And grateful incense breathes from ev'ry plain:
 And yet a family survive to pour
 Their countless offspring on each distant shore;
 Who in the ark the wreck of life withstood,
 Till in its channels slept the mighty flood.

Meanwhile the altar smokes, and many a sign
 Conveys the promise of a birth divine;
 'Tis past; and man supremely bless'd retains
 The infinite interminable gains;
 Religion pure, a moral law defin'd,
 And knowledge fitting his inferior mind.

Thus, as by solitary glooms repress'd,
The lighter passions quit the chasten'd breast;
While Sensibility's suggestions sweet
Induce to linger in the still retreat;
So in each varying scene while she inspires,
The mind a corresponding frame acquires.
Whether the sun our daring glance excite,
Moving in radiant state his world of light;
Or thro' the blue immensity we rove,
And mark the orbs resplendent from above;
In constellations see the stars resolve,
And countless spheres in harmony revolve;
When night majestic bids the vision glow,
And shade and silence hush the world below!
Or, whelm'd in mist, the beetling cliff we gain,
When stormy tumult rends the bursting main;
And, far upon the echoing beach below,
Th' enormous rolling waves their surges throw,
Dash'd into torrent floods of foaming snow!

Or while the thunder bursts the flashing clouds
And raging tempests shake the gloomy woods,
From covert haste, and unappall'd survey
Where the dread light'ning wings its fiery way!
Or love to roam where pathless wilds are found,
And fatal serpents hiss along the ground;
Thro' tangled brakes and forests' dismal shades,
While strange solicitude the mind pervades;
Or up the rugged mountain steep and high,
Whose precipices seem to scale the sky,
We ardent climb to view the prostrate plain,
Diffus'd remote toward the silent main;
While at our feet incumbent vapours form,
Till rising winds disperse the gath'ring storm;
And, louder yet than a tempestuous shore,
Rush the full thunders of the torrent's roar,
As from some chasm of stupendous height
It plunges its precipitated weight;
Spreads far a foamy atmosphere around,
And scares the distant trav'ller with its sound!

Or, when retiring from these scenes immense,
 Familiar nature soothes th' enamour'd sense ;
 When, grac'd with all the vernal season yields,
 We range with curious step the flow'ring fields,
 Watch the green blade divide the furrow'd land,
 The bashful blossom to the light expand ;
 The primrose breathing in the hedge-row shade,
 The stream, the spire, the vista, and the glade ;
 The flocks and herds that graze the hills around,
 Mingling their various cries of rural sound ;
 While haply list'ning on some fence we lean,
 And view with tranquil eye the cultur'd scene.

Next incidental pleasure's pensive train
 The lone employment of the mind sustain ;
 With all their casual interests they throng,
 And solitude's illusive hour prolong.

To Druid monuments we turn, and trace
 In solemn scenes each consecrated place ;

Or on the barren heath, by pow'r unknown,
Astonish'd view th' enormous temple thrown !

In yonder field the boasts of freedom tell
How countless slaves before her banners fell;
And there the pillar lifts its witness high,
To warm the bosom of posterity.
Say, will the stranger pass and not inquire?
Will he depart without congenial fire?
Shall not a noble pride his mind expand?—
He feels at once a sword within his hand,
And stands th' avenger of his native land!

O'er yonder moss-grown tomb, with eye intent,
The trav'ler bends to read th' inscrib'd event;
At length disclos'd the name and distant date,
What pleasing int'rest will the spot create!

Behind yon trees the ruin'd turrets frown
Of some old castle, ever mould'ring down :

From those still battlements the warrior's cries,
 In ages past, resounded thro' the skies;
 There the artillery its dread fury pour'd,
 There gleam'd the lightning of th' assailing sword;
 Till th' irreparable breach gave way,
 And hostile rage came rushing on its prey.—
 With oft-remitted step, we silent pass
 Amid the rank-grown weeds and dewy grass,
 Each tow'r and darksome avenue descry,
 And not a vault escapes the curious eye;
 The wind that sweeps the desolated rooms,
 The wall-flow'r wild, which ev'ry arch perfumes,
 The owl which sudden rushes from his nest,
 —All pour a lonely pleasure on the breast.

Such are th' employments of th' abstracted mind,
 To Sensibility and shades resign'd.

INFLUENCES
OF
SENSIBILITY.



PART II.

INFLUENCES OF SENSIBILITY.

PART II.

THUS far my verse the pleasing search explores,
To point the feeling mind's peculiar stores.
New subjects now the way-ward strain excite,
To trace th' attractive series of delight
Amid the richer scenes where passion glows,
And social life united good bestows.
And see where friendship, with benignant charms,
Expands her breast, and spreads her graceful arms!
And laughing love, with shrewd endearing wile,
Awakes on beauty's cheek the partial smile!

Hail, Friendship! source of undissembled praise,
To thee the muse her cordial tribute pays;

Thou milder light of life, whose genial force
 From love's approaching orb derives its source:
 Oh never may diverse opinions rend
 Thy tender tie, and sever friend from friend;
 For why without an error of the heart,
 Should unessential trifles cause to part?
 Or anger oft with jealous haste awake,
 Ere candour's smile explain the rash mistake?

Is there a gen'rous breast by fortune torn,
 Incens'd by disappointment's secret thorn?
 On whom conspiring nature seems to frown,
 To thwart each rising wish of fair renown?
 O shun the lonely hour, misfortune's snare,
 To brood in secret o'er insidious care;
 For, oft accusing fortune's partial plan,
 At length the frail complaint impeaches man:
 Till fix'd in boundless hate the passions roll
 Accumulating darkness on the soul!

But if from social intercourse there flow
 The balm which mitigates severest woe;
 If mutual merits mutual praise attract,
 And just applause reward each graceful act;
 If timely counsel check th' impending fault,
 And prompt support to noblest aims exalt;
 To friendship turn, and life perhaps anew,
 With all its parted joys, will meet the view:
 Assur'd, while kindling in her kind embrace,
 One genuine friend conciliates all the race!

How vain were else accumulated wealth,
 The luxury of arts, or pride of health;
 In vain amusements' ever changing round,
 The joyous dance, and music's melting sound;
 Or when th' incumbent cares of life are fled,
 The mind to rural solitude is led.
 Her fairest prospects nature blends in vain,
 Unfelt her smiles, where wants the smile of man!

Devolving thus, from passion's copious source
 Proceeds the stream of life's enchanting course;
 Yet far below its banks the eddies play,
 And languid oft it dwells upon its way;
 Till rising love his confluent urn combines,
 And lo! replet, the crystal current shines!

Oh happy he, beyond all names that charm,
 The youth whose breast with virtuous love is warm;
 Who oft, from life's tumultuous scenes retir'd,
 Attends the fair, with mutual hope inspir'd;
 Before whose beauty all attraction fades,
 No rival eye allures, or tongue persuades;
 But all his animated actions prove
 The blameless partiality of love.
 Still, as amid the flow'ry scene they range,
 And soft ideas and looks benign exchange;
 Anticipation sees no evils nigh,
 To quench the dewy rapture of their eye;

Or mar the lovely visions they compare
 In hope's unlimited perspective fair.
 Yet oft they prove, to silent passion wrought,
 The pure unutter'd luxury of thought;
 A gradual calm o'er ev'ry fibre glides,
 Emotion sleeps, and almost hope subsides!

So mid the boundless flush which spring reveals,
 A lucid veil o'er heav'n's bright azure steals;
 The sun diffus'd maintains his course unseen,
 The landscape sleeps beneath the light serene;
 Scarce heard the breeze, the wood its voice suspends,
 Nor gentle fall of fragrant rain descends;
 Prolific silence charms the list'ning plain,
 And secret nature swells in ev'ry vein.

Pursue, ye happy pair, your smiling way,
 While all around enchantment seems to play;
 When ev'ning comes, and home salutes your view,
 Sweet is the emotion of your last adieu;

And sweet the promise on some other day,
 Again with love and innocence to stray.
 The heart, tenacious of its fond employ,
 Tho' parted, vibrates with the recent joy,
 As o'er the sky a varied radiance blends,
 When from the purple hills the sun descends,
 And upward long his ling'ring light extends!

Around yon train (be heav'n and virtue there)
 The soften'd bosom sighs from fair to fair;
 The glowing youth partake th' unwonted charm,
 Return each sigh, and all their looks grow warm;
 E'en now, I hear the hymeneal song,
 And the blithe dance its mazes sweep along.

And whence the pleasures of the wedded pair,
 Amid extreme solicitude and care?
 Is not the amiable secret this—
 Participation forms their sum of bliss?

While, as their smiling offspring rise around,
 With added cares increasing joys abound;
 A wider range their social bosoms prove,
 And ev'ry nameless charm resolves in love.
 See the fond parent careful hush to rest
 The infant smiling at her tranquil breast;
 As urgent still, its little hands excite
 The balmy sources of well known delight;
 O'er its warm cheek the roseate slumbers creep,—
 It sinks in graceful attitude to sleep.
 Soft on its sighing lips the fond caress,
 Hope, tenderness, and joy, at once impress;
 While not a sound disturbs the silent scene,
 Save gratitude's soft utter'd voice serene.

Say then, will care and anxious hours destroy
 Maternal transport, and connubial joy?
 The heart is form'd those tender pains to bear
 Which teach it a superior bliss to share;

Which with the duties of our state combine,
And in proportion as they wound, refine.

Thus where the linnet builds her secret nest,
Protecting thorns may wound her trembling breast ;
Yet mindful of th' expected store she brings,
Warm o'er her brood she spreads her flutt'ring wings,
Distributes all, then cheerful sits and sings.

Ah ! what were youth without the tender mind,
And hours of purest bliss to love assign'd ?
What then could hope, thro' nature's wide survey,
Suggest to charm the ling'ring hours away ?
To fire the bounding bosom into health,
Which scorns to owe its lone delights to stealth ?
For noblest motives urge the gen'rous soul
Where happy love's ingenuous ardours roll.
With all its sails life's vessel bounds before,
As hope's full tides connect the distant shore,

Whence fraught with odours float the welcome gales,
 And the glad mind the prosp'rous omen hails;
 At ev'ry port its secret freight improves,—
 Rich with the commerce of delight it moves!

How then unblest, whose faded youth has known
 The joys of love, but all these joys are flown;
 For disappointment chill'd his blooming hopes,
 And sad, in solitude of life, he droops;
 In vain he casts his languid eyes around,
 Nor tender wife, nor prattling child is found;
 But such the heart which no endearments share,
 Unconscious soon appears each selfish care.
 When sadden'd hope with still decreasing sphere,
 Scarce kens the prospect of another year;
 When curiosity deserts the mind
 No more to speculative lore inclin'd;
 And dark forgetfulness shall scarce deplore
 Life's vivid colours to be seen no more;

And vision fail, the sinking heart beat low,
 The pallid cheek unconscious of a glow;
 What comfort then shall soothe his mournful mind,
 While to the grave he hastes, nor leaves a name behind?

Yet there are some may thank their fav'ring fate
 For pleasures mingled in the single state;
 ' For them no heirs shall scorn their aged brow,
 ' No daughter credit the betrayer's vow;
 ' They can enjoy their friends without reproof,
 ' While merry midnight rocks the social roof;
 ' Or if a restless spirit lure to roam,
 ' Shift where they list, the world itself their home.'

Far happier they who, freed from ev'ry claim,
 Extend to all an universal flame;
 In full diffusion, yield to all mankind
 The heart, which no peculiar choice can bind.—

And such there are, whose names the muse would
deem,

The fairest honour that attends her theme;
But genuine merit its own claims repays,
And consanguinity forbids the praise;
Enough, that num'rous friends their worth declare,
And tutor'd children love their guardian care.

Benignant heaven! where's the state below,
Whence no conciliating blessings flow?
In which the heart at length not reconcil'd,
Finds all the track of life a barren wild?

From love the pleasing theme to beauty roves,
Beauty, which Sensibility improves.—
Yes, all enchanting pow'r! by thee array'd,
Transcendant graces clothe the matchless maid.
Tho' less than truth's unfault'ring hand combine
The flowing form, and fair proportion'd line—

From thee attractive modesty proceeds;
 From thee the blush the glowing cheek o'erspreads:
 Thine is the alter'd mien, as oft the gaze,
 Uncheck'd by decency, the form surveys;
 Or scans the spotless breast which gently swells,
 And all but love's permitted suit repels.

Already has the muse th' attraction own'd
 Which masculine endowments shed around:
 How shall her hand the pleasing task essay
 While female beauty claims the plausible lay?
 In whose soft breast, refin'd, the passions move,—
 The wish of pity, or the glow of love?

Where shall I turn, amid unnumber'd charms,
 Whose various claim reluctant choice disarms?
 O come, Maria, from th' enchanting throng,
 With thy unblemish'd name adorn my song;
 If aught of int'rest clothe its wand'ring strain,
 Those smiling lips will not their praise refrain;

Those lips of cordial love, which only part
 To breathe the harmony that tunes the heart;
 Which oft on affluence' list'ning ear impress
 Some story of unmerited distress;
 With accents mild reprove th' untoward mind,
 And soothe th' afflicted breast to heav'n resign'd.

Oh! be it mine with impulse not unchaste,
 With guardian arms, to shield that lovely waist.
 Still may those eyes on me their light employ,
 And be it mine to fill their beams with joy;
 Still mine to hush that bosom into peace,
 Till life and conjugal endearment cease.

But say, shall beauty's fruitless praise delude
 The mind, forgetful of each nobler good?
 Shall vanity usurp the destin'd place
 Of truth, and folly's trifling arts debase?
 View then, yon faded flow'rets of the vale,
 And learn that all terrestrial charms are frail

Dear Sensibility, the wish impart
 That forms to virtue's laws the cheerful heart;
 Instruct how nobler than the toilette's cares,
 The sober mind, which still for heav'n prepares;
 Till all accomplish'd it exult away,
 To hail the radiance of eternal day!

Yet in the medium may the fair indulge,
 There are those cares which sense and taste divulge:
 Oft is th' attractive disposition seen,
 By well arrang'd attire, and graceful mien;
 Not wisdom's voice the charm of dress derides,
 For Sensibility e'en here presides.—
 Still wind, ye clust'ring locks, with decent art
 Shade the fair cheek, or on the forehead part;
 Where beaming, like the ev'ning star, it shews
 O'er its expanse intelligent repose.
 Ye garments, still your ductile folds display
 As grace moves forward on its winning way;

The charm of loveliness were giv'n in vain,
 If seemly care may not the gift maintain.
 And why with nature should not art combine,
 Assist her blandishments, her charms refine?
 Why should th' adorning hand forbear its skill?
 Behold around in field, and vale, and hill,
 Nature an ornament to nature still.
 To deck the verdure, flow'rs unnumber'd bloom,
 And flatt'ring colours aid the soft perfume.
 And lo! in climes of beauty unarray'd,
 Where the dark lover woos the partial maid,
 Can aught attract beyond the native charm?
 Yet bracelets glitter on her tawny arm;
 To deck her forehead, wreaths of feathers gay,
 By fancy plac'd, in wild profusion play.
 This maxim too th' untutor'd savage knows,
 'Tis beauty to conceal, as to disclose;
 Attend, ye fair ones of my native isle,
 And hear the precept with a pard'ning smile;

Poor is the libertine's ignoble praise,
Where honourable love no tribute pays;
At modesty's attractive shrine alone,
Is faith confirm'd, and lasting passion known.

INFLUENCES
OF
SENSIBILITY.



PART III.

INFLUENCES OF SENSIBILITY.

PART III.

To Sensibility belong the train
Of all who breathe the soul-expanding strain;
And all who teach the rural echoes song,
In sylvan scenes, amid the shepherd throng.

Distinguish'd he who feels the muse's flame
Exalt his soul, and animate his frame;
Where'er he roves, alike in ev'ry place
Imagination sheds her height'ning grace;
No idle hour his ardent genius knows,
In tumult's haunts, or shades of mild repose,
Harmonious thought in soft protraction flows.

When transient sleep the midnight hour forsakes,
 To fill the weary pause, the muse awakes;
 To frame some lay to soothe the virgin's ear,
 Or pay the tribute due to friendship's bier.

Delightful Poetry! whate'er thy scene,
 Descriptive, moral, turbulent, serene;
 Still o'er thy page as raptur'd fancy dwells,
 The manners soften, and the genius swells.

Sometimes shall Shakspeare o'er the passions reign,
 Impress with awe, or pierce with gen'rous pain;
 To smiles or tears bid softer themes excite,
 Of love, and woe, and beauty, and delight;
 Or Milton, strong in unremitted soul,
 The variable feelings shall control;
 While as thro' yet sublimer spheres he rides,
 And stems imagination's stormy tides;
 Unveils the black profundities of hell,
 And tells how low rebellious angels fell;

Or, oft ascending from the dang'rous gloom,
 Bids spotless beauty breathe and Eden bloom!
 Or Thomson's wild exuberance of song
 Shall paint the seasons as they roll along;
 As laughing Spring, with wreaths of blossoms crown'd,
 Returns diffusing life and light around;
 Or Summer fires th' attenuated skies,
 While all beneath in listless languor lies;
 Or Autumn mellows her rich world of grain,
 And plenty smiles amid her purple reign;
 Or Winter, rushing in surrounding storms,
 With snows and floods the ravag'd year deforms!

In interchange of recreation pure,
 Shall music oft th' harmonious hour allure.
 Mysterious Pow'r! to high perfection wrought,
 And still enjoy'd without the toil of thought;
 While Poetry assumes the loftier part,
 To blend instruction with her graceful art;

With eloquent expression to invest
 Each nobler sentiment that warms the breast;
 'Tis thine, thro' harmony's unmeasur'd range
 To trace sensation's evanescent change.
 Tho' not a scene sublime or rural dawn,
 By fancy's visionary pencil drawn;
 Obedient still, the varying passions prove
 The martial ardour, or the warmth of love.

Hark! in the wind th' aërial concord flies,
 The mingling notes in soft succession rise;
 And scarcely pausing on their swift career,
 Perform their pleasant message to the ear.
 Around our path a novel charm extends,
 Th' accustom'd scene romantic wildness blends;
 The form of beauty moves with finer grace,
 And more divinely smiles the human face.
 Delicious interval! when all suppress'd,
 Its own and other's cares forsake the breast!

But painting too attests her favour'd hour,
 From Sensibility's inspiring pow'r.
 Say what were Raphael's hand without her aid!
 Were nature then in all her truth display'd?
 The graceful line, expression breathing soul,
 Th' appropriate action, and the mighty whole,
 Were these upon the living canvass found?
 Or their great author first of painters crown'd?

Strong to conception must the mind be wrought
 Before the pencil stamp the vivid thought;
 Whether the battle rush beneath the hand,
 Or eloquence assert her high command,
 Or love and beauty smile to win the heart,
 Or from affliction's eye the sorrows start.

Hail, heav'n-born souls! ye highly favour'd throng,
 Who range the mazes of harmonious song:
 Who, by the spirit of the muses taught,
 Thro' utmost nature wing creative thought.

Hail, ye who breathe aërial trance around,
 From soft according instruments of sound !
 And ye, whose pencil nature bade combine
 The truth and vigour of her own design.
 If lost th' illustrious record of your name,
 And swept your works from being and from fame,
 Sunk then were all the honours of mankind,
 And dark the boundless universe of mind.
 The void the heart would feel without your aid,
 A source exhaustless of delight is made.
 Capacity extends her shining sphere,
 And emulation claims her high career;
 And all the energies that form the soul,
 Redouble, kindled by your great control.

But not alone to touch the feeling string,
 And send excursive fancy on the wing,
 From Sensibility devolves the source
 Whence mental progress winds its mighty course.

Thence too proceeds that noblest sense of praise
 Which bids the soul its best exertions raise ;
 Arms all its passions with the just intent,
 Spite of the strong temptation and th' event ;
 While truth's resistless voice is heard within,
 Whisp'ring th' award the virtues ever win.

Awaken'd thus, the powers, in strong array,
 Toward perfection gain their conq'ring way ;
 The sun of science beams profuse around,
 And genius moves with wreaths of glory crown'd.

Hence too diffus'd behold the boundless zeal
 When patriot war assumes th' avenging steel !
 See Spain, thro' all her coasts, indignant rise,
 Reveal'd sublime from slav'ry's long disguise :
 And lo ! as soon her mighty standard waves,
 Despair confounds the tyrant and his slaves.

Oh be it thus with Britain's filial hosts,
 When bursting dangers gather round her coasts;
 Roll all the thunders of Britannia's pow'r,
 And dash invasion from the sacred shore!
 Oh Sensibility! thyself assert
 That dreadful day supreme in ev'ry heart.
 Else what our native land, our king, and laws,
 Or honour's or religion's greater cause?
 The hallow'd tombs where all our fathers rest,
 And nature's ties which bind the faithful breast?
 What all the records of a glorious name?
 The fabric of accumulated fame?
 Freedom its base, dominion for its crown,
 Lo! o'er the subject nations it looks down;
 Repels aggression, mocks the tyrant's hate,
 And stands the bulwark of each injur'd state!

In vain, O orators, shall ye inspire
 Th' unfeeling breast with honour's matchless fire;

Ye point to the majestic shades in vain,
 Of heroes, once the glories of the plain.
 High Eloquence herself, with all her pow'r,
 Shall raise its slumb'ring energies no more;
 In vain the leader thro' the battle flies,
 Encouragement and threats alternate tries;
 Before his view the panic-thousands yield.
 Blood, and confusion, spread the groaning field.

But should the slaves exist whose hearts are cold
 More to the love of country than of gold;
 Who could stand by, and see the hostile brand
 With desolation mark their native land;
 Forbid it, heav'n, that such should share thy smile
 Among the gen'rous sons of Britain's isle!

Nor let th' enlighten'd philanthropic mind
 Which blends at once the good of all mankind,
 From this uncensur'd source and gen'rous aim,
 Deceiv'd, renounce the local patriot's name.

Freedom to him appeals, and social good
 Springs from the hallow'd off'ring of his blood.
 And lo! supreme amid th' illustrious bands,
 With kindling pride, behold where Nelson stands!
 He who in sickness sought the joyless wave,
 To seal the confidence a nation gave.
 But see! the champion of his country's cause
 Falls amid tears of sorrow and applause!
 Amid the shouts of victory he died,
 And left a mighty chasm on the tide;
 Crowd to the void, ye heroes that survive,
 From him the terror of your acts derive;
 And let the sorrow which a nation paid,
 An unfeign'd off'ring to his sacred shade,
 With all the honours of a patriot's grave,
 Be your's:—such is the exit of the brave!

O source of all that's amiable below,
 From whom we learn to feel and cherish woe;

Dear Sensibility! as oft the mind,
 With pity weeps the sorrows of mankind;
 Or to the mournful grave our steps repair,
 Friendship's last rites to pay with pious care;
 Or when repentance breathes its way to heav'n,
 And finds within the promis'd pardon giv'n.
 For oft the ardour of the breast impels
 Beyond the consciousness where virtue dwells.
 Hope then with sordid schemes allures the view,
 Or bids the soul ambition's paths pursue;
 And mem'ry all as frail, delights to muse
 On ev'ry scene which guilty joy renews;
 Friendship to treach'ry leads, or wastes its pow'rs
 In banded vice, and riot's bois'trous hours;
 And love, to sensuality a prey,
 Inspires alone to flatter and betray.

To thee, O Virtue, then I yield my cause,
 Blest and secure beneath thy guardian laws;

And while I feel thy precepts hard to keep,
 I recollect the fruits they teach to reap;
 Tho' all around the shades of sorrow blend,
 And age has scarcely left a single friend,
 When poverty makes bare the cottage walls,
 And life's last hope in blank extinction falls,
 Thou shew'st a future world, and bidd'st be still
 The throbbing heart, and frail-complaining will

But virtue's charms to paint, let vice be nigh,
 Reveal'd in all her black deformity.
 To prove her blessings, let the veil disclose
 The dreadful scenes which lawless pleasure shews.
 Rend yon disguise of artifice and night,
 And bring the cowering hypocrite to light;
 Then hear sincerity with candid air
 The spotless purpose of her soul declare!
 Join yonder riot, there the drunkard see
 Obscene, and sporting with profanity:

Then to the calm domestic scene repair,
 And, with increas'd delight, its pleasures share :
 See where the gamester from the dice retires,
 His bosom burning with a madman's fires ;
 Then view where smiling industry pursues
 The healthful toil which ev'ry day renews ;
 Behold yon wretch, seduction's hapless prey,
 The scorn or victim of the public way ;
 Pierc'd by the wintry wind, on yonder stone
 At length she sinks, unpitied and alone.
 Ah, shall that faded bosom once again,
 Sincerely contrite, peace and hope attain ?
 'Tis past ; yet heav'n e'en now may smile to view
 The dawning purity unfold anew ;
 And angels hov'ring round the fatal place
 Receive her spirit in their blest embrace.

Soon at the grave appears her slighted bier,
 Without a mourner and without a tear ;

There, all forgotten, with the worm to rest,
And no record to melt the stranger's breast.

Such is her fate, the dearest once of all
Whom beauty, youth, and love, their fav'rites call!
Yes! in superior life, ere vice suborn'd,
With ev'ry gentler grace she shone adorn'd;
Around her person praise and pleasure smil'd,
And soft endearments all her hours beguil'd:
Oft o'er her couch parental love has wept,
While yet in spotless innocence she slept;
And scenes of distant happiness combin'd,
In fair perspective, sooth'd their sanguine mind.
Nor ceas'd with infancy each anxious care,
Solicitude has wept from year to year;
And livelier hope endear'd the fond embrace,
As grew the fair in virtue and in grace.
Soon her own heart with rising fancy glows,
Soon for herself the scenes of hope disclose;

Imagination prompts each pleasing theme,—
 Ah who but knows what youth and beauty dream!
 Far, far away, the promis'd joys are fled,
 And life's fair blossoms in a moment shed!

Afflicted parents! what despair shall rend
 Your breaking hearts, to hear her dismal end!
 Ah no: long since, by bleeding sorrow's doom,
 You rest together in the timeless tomb.

In vain the muse would paint the contrast here,
 Or soothe the heart oppress'd with grief severe;
 On eyes, suffus'd with pity's sacred stream,
 The vivid rays of joy obtrusive beam.

Turn then the glance on him whose guilty brow
 Betrays a mind that boasts the perjur'd vow,
 And, still unsated, with a jocund air
 For other victims spreads the fatal snare.

Yet, yet, O Sensibility, assert
Thy strongest pow'r to melt his savage heart :
To ev'ry breast thy soft control extend,
And, while thy joys on virtue's smile depend,
With mutual charm the human scene restore,
And bid all rise the paradise before !——

THE END.



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